

Washington - On July 31 and August 1, the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) will conduct a hearing on whether current tariffs on hot-rolled carbon steel from eleven countries should remain in place. Tomorrow morning Congressman Charlie Wilson (D-OH) will testify before the ITC. Wilson serves on the Executive Board of the Congressional Steel Caucus. He will testify that the tariffs prevent foreign steel producers from unfairly dumping their products into the U.S. market at subsidized prices and should be kept in place.

Under World Trade Organization rules and U.S. law, the U.S. ITC is required to conduct a 5-year review regarding antidumping and countervailing duty orders on hot-rolled carbon steel flat products from Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Romania, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, and Ukraine.

The orders at issue are essential to preserving such a market. The last time these countries had unrestricted access to the United States, their shipments soared from 1.25 million NT in 1998 to 4.15 million NT in 2000 - an increase of 232 percent in only two years. Significantly, this surge in imports took place while domestic producers were trying to recover from another surge of documented unfair trade in hot-rolled steel from Brazil, Japan, and Russia. The combination of these two surges triggered a massive crisis among American hot-rolled steel producers that ultimately forced many of the nation's oldest and largest producers of hot-rolled steel (including Bethlehem, National, and LTV) into bankruptcy and liquidation.

"The numbers speak for themselves," Wilson said. "If given the opportunity the countries in question would ship unfairly traded steel to our shores again."

"In the ten years that I served in the Ohio House and Senate, I fought to stimulate and preserve job opportunities for Ohio's workers and their families," Wilson said. "I'm proud to continue that work as a member of Congress.

Ohio has been home to generations of American steelworkers and the United Steelworkers argue the threat to domestic producers is greater now than it was during 2000.

"Consider the example of China, which has built vast amounts of new hot-rolled capacity since the orders were imposed," said Holly Hart, Legislative Director for the United Steelworkers. "In 2000, China's production was only 72-percent of U.S. production, but this year China's production will equal 374-percent of U.S. production. China's record leaves absolutely no doubt that it will flood this market if it gets the chance."

The hearings begin at 9:30 am each day and will take place at the U.S. International Trade Commission Building in the main hearing room at 500 E. St. SW, Washington, D.C. 20436.

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